



Biennial Report to the Oregon Legislative
Assembly

September 19, 2016

Department of Human Services
Veterans Outreach

July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2016

Background

Senate Bill 241, passed by the Oregon Legislative Assembly in the 2011 regular legislative session and enacted through ORS 408.505, requires state agencies to ask if a customer or client is a veteran and to provide information from the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs (ODVA) and reintegration team within the Oregon Military Department to veterans. In addition, in each even-numbered year, agencies must report to the legislature on the effectiveness of measures undertaken to make information available regarding veterans' benefits and services.

Overview of the Department of Human Services

The Department of Human Services (DHS) is Oregon's principal agency for helping Oregonians achieve wellbeing and independence through opportunities that protect, empower, respect choice and preserve dignity for those we serve.

DHS primarily serves children, adults and families, elderly individuals, and individuals experiencing a disability. DHS provides access to supportive services such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Employment Related Day Care (ERDC), and Medicaid for the Aged, Blind, and Disabled populations; along with case management for specific programs, licensing functions for various types of services in individual's communities, employment related services, and abuse investigations.

Benefits and services are delivered through more than 100 field offices throughout the state. In addition, information and referral to community resources to address specific needs such as housing, or another agency that serves specific populations such as veterans, are a regular part of providing services to assist individuals and families in the goal for independence, safety, and health.

Outreach to Veterans

Oregon Revised Statute 408.505 requires agencies to provide materials to inform individuals how to contact the ODVA and the reintegration team within the Oregon Military Department to request information about veterans' benefits and services. DHS accomplishes this work through multiple avenues of service.

Website links. Oregon.gov websites are standardized in the information and home-page layout. The ODVA logo and web-link appear at the bottom of each Oregon.gov website. Viewers of the DHS websites can, from any page, click on the ODVA link to inquire about benefits and services for Veterans, their spouses and their dependents. DHS's On-Line Application also links customers who indicate they are a current military service member or veteran of military services to the ODVA website to explore services that might be available to them.

Oregon continues to participate and provide services to older adults through the Aging and Disability Resource Connection of Oregon (ADRC). These services are run out of local Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) and have connections with County Veteran Service Offices to support Oregonians and older adults who are or may be eligible for Veteran Services make connections across our systems.

Materials. DHS stocks the ODVA Outreach Magazine (MSC 0407) in our Forms and Distribution center. These magazines are available for branch offices to place in their lobbies and for staff to give directly to applicable clients. Since January 2015, more than 17,000 ODVA Outreach magazines have been distributed to our branch offices.

Applications for Benefits. The Aging and People with Disabilities Application form (SDS 0539A) contains a question to determine if the applicant or their spouse is or was a veteran. The Self-Sufficiency Programs Application for Assistance (DHS 0415F) contains a similar questions to capture information about whether an applicant or family member is or was a veteran.

Where an individual is federally required to pursue all other assets, our DHS offices work closely with Oregonians and County Veteran Service Officers, to make referrals and receive confirmation of application of services, in order to move forward with eligibility.

DHS also started work on HB2422 which asked DHS to add a question and collect information on Veteran's and share this file with ODVA if the individual provides a release.

- DHS's On-Line Application for SNAP benefits is collecting information about whether someone is a Veteran. Through the On-

Line Application, a customer can indicate if they are a current military service member or veteran of military services and authorize DHS to share their information with the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs (ODVA).

- The language will also be incorporated as part of the integrated ONE program for DHS eligibility.

These questions, while not required for DHS program eligibility, are to obtain information about the people served to determine what national, state or local resources they may be entitled to or could benefit from. Asking this question of applicants helps to begin the conversation regarding other resources available to meet their specific needs.

PARIS. DHS has been working in collaboration with ODVA to determine the most efficient and effective way to reach out to individual's identified through the Public Assistance Reporting Information System (PARIS) as being potentially eligible for Veteran benefits. DHS sends a file quarterly to the federal government of all individuals receiving services through DHS programs and this information is returned with matching data for any individuals who may have received or may be eligible for a federal Veteran benefit. DHS-APD has been piloting this report over the last couple of years, and had been reporting issues or concerns to ODVA leadership. DHS, OHA, and ODVA formed a committee to review this report and out of that work, DHS and ODVA signed a data use agreement in 2016 to start sharing the data with ODVA. ODVA will reach out to Veteran's through their County Veteran Service Officers (VSO) and DHS will collect information back about outcomes of this work.

Internally, DHS continues to also seek opportunities to employ Veterans within our agency. To increase this work, a group of DHS Veterans formed an employee resource group (VERG), to work on strategies to assist DHS in continuing to be able to offer opportunities, attract, and retain Veterans within our agency.

Summary

DHS continues to provide applicants and recipients with information regarding state and local resources, including ODVA, which are available to assist individuals and families in becoming safe and self-sufficient.

DHS Contact

Nathan Singer, Aging and People with Disabilities Deputy Operations
Director (503) 269-8913 nathan.m.singer@state.or.us

Daniel Haun, Self-Sufficiency Deputy Director (971) 352-1446
daniel.r.haun@state.or.us